



The Many Faces Of Israel

Israel 101: Page 41

Note to teachers: We urge you to order the DVD Israel: Small Country, Big Ideas! available through www.learnisrael.org/libraryproject.asp#powerpoint. If you order the DVD through your library, StandWithUs and LearnIsrael will donate it.

Rationale and Goals

- To show the human face of Israeli society, which is multiracial, multireligious and multicultural.
- To demonstrate the wide cultural diversity of Israel, from the traditionally religious to the very modern, from rural to European-like urban, from classical culture (such as ballet and orchestra music) to young and trendy culture.
- To show the geographic diversity of Israel—from deserts to mountains, from modern urban life to agricultural and rural life.

Discussion Questions:

- Read the following comment from a CNN producer to students:
“An international-news producer friend at CNN told me: ‘Our viewers are confused. We have footage of Jews who look like Arabs, Arabs who look like Jews. We have black Jews, bearded 16th-century Jews, and sexy girls in tight jeans. Who are these people, anyway?’” —Donna Rosenthal in *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land*.

There is so much focus on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that the general public has only misleading stereotypes about the average Israeli. What is your image of Israelis? How is that image changed by the collage on page 41?

(Students should review standwithuscampus.com/?page_id=115. Explain to students that Israel has tremendous diversity. Israelis come from over 80 countries around the world and include African, Asian and Latin American Jews. Almost half of today’s Israeli Jews came from other Middle Eastern countries. Twenty percent of Israelis are non-Jews and include Arabs, Christians, Muslims, Druze, Karaites, Baha’is, and Circassians.)

- Compare and contrast Israel with the U.S. and Canada, which also are countries with large numbers of immigrants. In what ways are the Jewish immigrants of Israel similar to and different from the immigrants of these other countries? (A major difference is that the Jews’ ancestral roots are in Israel, unlike the immigrants of other countries.) How do immigrants enrich a culture?
- Israel is a land of tremendous contrasts both geographically and culturally. How do the pictures on page 41 convey some of those contrasts, and how do they change your image of Israel?

Activities

Activity 1

Getting to Know the Israeli People

Preparation:

Estimated Time: One class period • **Materials:** DVD *Israel: Small Country, Big Ideas!* (slides 34-48); *Israel 101*

Background: As an introduction to Israel’s “rich, diverse and vibrant multicultural society,” the DVD has a vivid presentation of Israel’s diverse people and how they got to Israel. *Israel 101* has a picture collage of Israelis (page 41). In this activity, students will see the video and use this collage as a catalyst for identifying and discussing the different ethnic, religious and cultural groups in Israel.

Activity:

Show students the DVD *Israel: Small Country, Big Ideas!*, slides 34-48. Then ask students to look at the collage photos on page 41 of *Israel 101*. Have them discuss what each picture represents, how it captures the information on the DVD, and what it conveys about life in Israel.

Ask students:

- How does the collage reflect the cultural, geographic and human diversity of Israel? How much does this diversity resemble that of the U.S., France, England etc.? What are its unique characteristics?
- From top to bottom, left to right, identify the Israelis. How does their setting convey information about the contrasts of Israeli society—rural versus urban, modern versus traditional, young versus old. (Israel has the highest fertility rate of any advanced industrial nation. It is baby friendly.)

1. Two men playing backgammon at a flea market in Jaffa
2. Conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta
3. Jewish bride and groom
4. Bedouin in Bedouin hospitality tent in the Negev
5. Yeshiva students
6. Two ultra-religious Jews walking by traditional and modern Israeli-Arabs in Jerusalem’s Old City
7. A young Jewish soldier and girlfriend
8. Greek Orthodox priests
9. Two Israeli-Jewish girls: Ethiopian and Caucasian
10. Ethiopian children in a playground
11. Young, religious Jewish child
12. Israeli writer Amos Oz
13. Surfers on an Israeli beach
14. Israeli child picking flowers in a field
15. Azrieli Towers in Tel Aviv
16. Soccer players
17. A Tel Aviv sidewalk café with modern-style Israelis
18. A crowd of young Israelis on the beach

Discussion: Have students discuss how this information changes their image of Israelis. How would they answer the CNN producer (in the first discussion question on the previous page)? If they were asked to write a short essay describing Israelis, what would they say?

Wrap-Up: There are many different types of Jewish and non-Jewish Israelis who live in Israel, making it an ethnologist’s paradise. Although there are less than 7 million Israelis, this small country has tremendous human diversity.

Activities

Activity 2

Getting to Know Israeli Culture

Preparation:

Estimated Time: one-half class period • **Materials:** Internet access

Background: Historian Howard Sachar noted that in addition to its scientific achievements, Israel has had immense intellectual and cultural vibrancy since its early founding. Hundreds of Israeli artists produced works snatched up by international art buyers. In 1965, UNESCO ranked Israel first in the world in theater attendance per capita and in annual numbers of performances. In 1975, Israel ranked second in the world in number of new book titles published annually per capita and had 1,000 libraries containing 9 million books. World-class symphonies and authors drew international acclaim. Israel ranked first in the world in the number of museums per capita, from the world-class Israel Museum to the smaller specialized museums of archeology, art, coins, folk culture, etc. Israelis also pursued popular culture with eagerness and produced rock stars, models, and world-renowned fashion houses as well as a wide variety of annual rock, folk, pop, and other kinds of concerts. Israelis also pursue leisure sports with passionate enthusiasm and turn out in droves to support their basketball, soccer, and other teams.

Activity

Explain to students the background described above. You might want to show one or two of the short videos from Israel Up Close (listed below) that would be of particular interest to your class. Then tell students to pick an area of particular interest to them (pop bands, fashion, film, theater, sports, cooking, wine making, architecture, literature, etc.) and find out what Israel is doing in this field.

(If you don't have many computers available, have students interested in the same topic work in groups for this activity.)

The best site to use for this activity: www.israel21c.org/bin/en.jsp?enPage=ArticlePage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=Zone&enZone=Profiles&

The best Internet sites to use for general background:

www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts%20About%20Israel/Looking%20at%20Israel/Looking%20at%20Israel-%20Culture%20and%20Leisure

www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/history/modern%20history/israel%20at%2050/the%20leisure%20culture%20of%20israel

For sports: www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/facts%20about%20israel/culture/culture-%20sports

Encourage students to look at the short descriptions of the videos available from Israel Up Close, which will give them further insight into the wide range of cultural life and activity in Israel at www.israelupclose.org/stories.html.

Activities

Activity 2

Discussion: Have students or groups report to the class on what they learned. How does this information impact their image of Israeli life and culture?

Have students discuss what aspects of Israeli history, society and government contributed to this cultural inventiveness and creativity. (How much has each of the following features of Israeli society contributed to it: Personal freedom, freedom of ideas, investment in education and the arts, immigrants bringing their unique cultural backgrounds, etc.?)

Wrap-up: Israel's rich and diverse cultural life has not only made life fun for Israelis, but has also allowed Israelis to make significant contributions to modern life and culture around the world.



Activities

Activity 3

Planning a Sightseeing Trip in Israel

Preparation:

Estimated time: 1 class period • **Materials:** Access to the Internet or to travel books; paper and pencil. (There are many Internet sites that promote tourism and will help students plan a trip. For example, “Tel Aviv Insider,” at www.tel-aviv-insider.com, describes what tourists can do and see in Tel Aviv.)

Background: Israel welcomes over 1 million tourists a year. They come to see religious or archeological sites; to see Jerusalem, a city holy to three religions; or to experience the tremendous geographic diversity of Israel, from the Dead Sea to the Judean Desert, the Golan Heights nature reserves and parks, and the beautiful coastal beaches. Or they come just to have fun. This activity should help students become more aware of the geographic and cultural diversity of Israel.

Activity: Divide the class into groups of four. Tell students they will be treated to a one-week trip to Israel. They should plan their own itineraries. What would they like to visit and do in that short time? Have the groups write out the plans for their trip and report to the class.

Wrap-up: Israel has tremendous diversity for such a small country with such a small population. The variety of choices students have made for their trips should reveal how great this diversity is.



Resources

Internet

Overview of development of Israeli culture since 1948—www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/culture1.html

Focus on 21st Century culture: Israel21c.org: A Focus Beyond the Conflict—www.israel21c.org (Click on the “Culture” tab.)

Collection of articles about Israelis in various cultural endeavors
www.israel21c.org/bin/en.jsp?enPage=ArticlePage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=Zone&enZone=Culture&

Profiles of Israelis in various fields of endeavor
www.israel21c.org/bin/en.jsp?enPage=ArticlePage&enDisplay=view&enDispWhat=Zone&enZone=Profiles&

Ashkenazim—www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Ashkenazim.html

Sephardim—www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Sephardim.html

Ethiopian Jews in Israel—www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/ejolim.html
Also see information about the Idan Raichel Project: www.idanraichelproject.com/en/index.php

Karaites—www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Karaites.html

Arab Israelis—www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Society_&_Culture/arabs2.html

Druze-Arab Israelis—www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Society_&_Culture/druze.html

Books

Biale, David (2002). *Cultures of the Jews* (Schocken Books).

Rosenthal, Donna (2003). *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land* (Free Press; paperback edition 2005). (Also see her Web site: www.donnarosenthal.com.)

Shkalim, Esther (2006). *A Mosaic of Israel's Traditions: Unity through Diversity* (Devora Publishing).

Videos

Each of the following videos is available at no charge (except for shipping) from: www.israelupclose.org/stories.html.

Cultural Diversity

Volume 15: *Israel Saves Sudanese Refugees*

News that Israel is a free and safe democratic country that respects human rights is spreading quickly amongst Muslim Sudanese refugees from Darfur who are fleeing genocide. Hundreds, who are looking for asylum and a better life, have crossed the Southern Border into Israel. In this video we hear from one of the 12 mothers.

Volume 2: *French Student's New Life in Israel*

A new French immigrant college student works part time for Magen David Adom.

Volume 5: *Entrepreneurs in the Golan Heights*

Short profiles of entrepreneurial members of a new community that so far includes a bed-and-breakfast, a restaurant, and an artist's workshop.

Volume 8: *The African Hebrews Living in Israel*

Focuses on the Black Hebrews, a group from the U.S. who traces its origins to an ancient tribe of the people of Israel.

Volume 11: *Revival of the Kibbutz Movement*

Recent revival and successes of the kibbutz movement.

Volume 12: *Ethiopian Immigrants Celebrate the SIGD*

A modern version of the centuries-old Ethiopian festival observed in honor of Ethiopian Jewry's longing to return to Jerusalem.

Volume 12: *Breaking Barriers in a Bilingual School*

An innovative elementary school in Jerusalem reaches out to both Jewish and Arab students.

Volume 12: *Young Farmers Return to the Negev*
Life of a young farmer in the Negev.

Volume 13: *Tourism in the Old City of Jerusalem*
Tour guides and merchants speak of renewed prosperity and coexistence in the Old City.

Volume 17: *Arabs & Jews/Martial Arts for Peace*
A new project that brings Arab and Jewish youngsters together in an effort to build trust and encourage dialog.

Music

Volume 7: *Israeli Musicians Rock in English*
Focuses on Nova, an up-and-coming Israeli rock band.

Volume 9: *The Boombamela Spring Festival*
A four-day new age festival that celebrates “love and peace.”

Volume 10: *Jacob’s Ladder, Blues and Folk Festival*
A popular music festival originally organized by expatriate Americans.

Volume 11: *Modiin Concert of Jewish Soul Music*
A fusion of Orthodox Judaism with rock and roll.

Volume 14: *Mayumana Rhythm Troupe*
A collaboration between veteran Israeli musician David Broza and members of the Mayumana Rhythm Troupe.

See/hear also, The Idan Raichel Project (CD): www.idanraichelproject.com/en/index.php.

Sports

Volume 3: *Israeli Women’s Flag Football Team*
After only one complete season, this team was invited to participate in the International Flag Football Championships.

Volume 8: *American Football Alive in Israel*
Super Bowl mania hits Israel.

Volume 13: *Baseball in Israel*
Focuses on a project to bring baseball to Israel.

Art

Volume 16: *Ein Hod, Unique Artists Colony*
Israeli artists have been shaking up the international art scene in growing numbers over the last decade, and their works can be found in the world’s top museums and exhibition halls. The uniqueness of this village is that you have to be an artist to reside there.

Architecture

Volume 5: *The White City*
Tel Aviv hosts the largest collection of buildings built in the Bauhaus, or International, architectural style, created in Germany in the 1920s. The United Nations declared Tel Aviv a “World Heritage Site,” an honor many in the city hope will spur the refurbishment of many of the Bauhaus buildings. The Bauhaus style is known for its clean lines, angular structures and open floor plans, all of which gave Tel Aviv its nickname, The White City.

Outreach

Volume 3: *High-Tech Jerusalem College*
College that aims to help integrate the Ethiopian community by teaching computer science, engineering, and other high-tech subjects.

Volume 6: *Caring for the Elderly and the Lonely*
Two teen volunteers “adopt” a grandmother as part of a program designed to reach out to the elderly.

Volume 15: *Israel Saves Sudanese Refugees*
Interview with a refugee family from Darfur who was provided a safe house in Israel.

Volume 17: *Israelis Care for Terror Victims*
Describes the One Family Fund, which provides financial and psychological support to Israeli victims of terror.